

Message Text

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43

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-20 NSC-07 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11

INR-11 LAB-06 NSAE-00 PA-04 RSC-01 SIL-01 PRS-01

DRC-01 /089 W

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R 171315Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1990

INFO USIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUDAPEST 2596

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: BEXP, HU

SUBJ: OPENING OF BUDAPEST FALL FAIR

1. PRIOR TO OPENING BUDAPEST FALL FAIR WE HAD BEEN TOLD BY FAIR OFFICIALS THAT WHILE THERE WOULD BE NO VISITS ON OPENING DAY INTO EXHIBITS, GOH OFFICIALS WOULD WALK BY ENTRANCE OF U.S. EXHIBIT WHERE AMB COULD GREET THEM. EXACT SPOT AND TIMING WERE AGREED UPON.

2. GOH HAD LARGE DELEGATION AT OPENING OF FAIR INCLUDING NEMETH, HUSZAR, BIRO AND INTERNAL TRADE MINISTER SZURDI. WHEN DELEGATION CAME NEAR, HOWEVER, THEY TURNED INTO ANOTHER CORRIDOR AT REAR END OF EXHIBIT, WALKED PAST GDR EXHIBIT AND WENT OUT OF BUILDING AT ANOTHER DOOR WITHOUT GOING PAST U.S. EXHIBIT.

3. BIRO DID DETACH HIMSELF FROM GROUP AND COME OVER TO SPEAK TO AMB ABOUT POSSIBLE SCHEDULING OF HIS TRIP TO WASHINGTON (SEPTEL), BUT HE DID NOT COME AS GOVT REPR VIS-A-VIS EXHIBIT.

4. FAILURE OF GOH OFFICIALS TO MAKE EVEN MINIMUM BOW TO U.S. EXHIBIT AND TO BE GREETED BY AMB WAS RUDE SHOCK. USIA FAIR DIRECTOR QUINN PROMPTLY RAISED MATTER WITH
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FAIR OFFICIALS, WHO FIRST SAID THERE HAD BEEN MISUNDER-

STANDING, BUT SUBSEQUENTLY PRESENTED APOLOGY.

5. INASMUCH AS INCIDENT APPEARED TO REFLECT LAST MINUTE DECISION, WHICH MUST HAVE BEEN AT FAIRLY HIGH POLITICAL LEVEL, AMB ALSO HAD DCM CALL SEPT. 16 ON VARKONYI (MFA) TO REGISTER OUR DISPLEASURE, EXPRESS JUDGMENT IT WAS HARD TO ESCAPE VIEW THIS WAS A POLITICAL DECISION, AND SEEK EXPLANATION.

6. VARKONYI OBVIOUSLY UNAWARE OF INCIDENT BEFORE CALL AND SAID MFA WOULD INVESTIGATE. REQUESTED THAT HIS PERSONAL APOLOGIES BE CONVEYED TO AMB AND SAID HE COULD CATEGORICALLY ASSURE US IMMEDIATELY THAT WHATEVER THE PROBLEM MIGHT HAVE BEEN, DECISION WAS NOT A POLITICAL ONE TO AVOID U.S. EXHIBIT. SAID THIS WOULD HAVE BEEN AGAINST EVERYTHING GOH WAS TRYING TO DO IN ITS POLICY WITH U.S. SAID IT HAD TO BE JUST A "GHASTLY MISTAKE".

7. COMMENT: AS DEPT AWARE, HUNGARY HAD CHANGED NATURE OF EXHIBITS THIS YEAR FROM "NATIONAL" ONES TO PRODUCT FOCUSES. ETEIRODELESS, WITHIN PRODUCT LINES EXHIBITIONS WERE ORGANIZED NATIONALLY. GOVT DEL VISITED NUMBER OF HUNGARIAN EXHIBITS AND AT LEAST WALKED PAST THOSE OF ALL EE COUNTRIES. FROM PRESS TREATMENT WE INCLINED TO THINK THEY DID NOT WALK BY ANY OTHER WESTERN EXHIBITS D THOUGH WE NOT SURE. WHILE WE ARE INCLINED TO THINK VARKONYI'S ASSURANCE THAT NO "POLITICAL" DECISION WAS TAKEN SPECIFICALLY TO AVOID U.S. EXHIBIT IS PROBABLY CORRECT (THERE BEING NO LOGICAL REASON WHY THEY WOULD WANT TO TAKE SUCH BLUNT STEP), EMB IS NOT AT ALL HAPPY WITH SITUATION. OUR GUESS IS THAT OUTCOME REPRESENTS A MONUMENTAL GAFFE OF SOME SORT, BUT WE WANT TO HEAR VARKONYI'S OFFICIAL REPLY BEFORE WE REACH FINAL CONCLUSIONS. REPRESENTATIVE FROM COMMERCE IS ABOUT TO ARRIVE TO DISCUSS U./). PARTICIPATION IN SPRING FAIR. BEFORE ANY COMMITMENT IS MADE, EMB FEELS IT IMPORTANT TO CLARIFY DEGREE AND LEVEL OF GOH INTEREST AND WHETHER U.S. EXHIBITS WILL RECEIVE APPROPRIATE PROTOCOL ATTENTION AT THAT TIME.

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